

Applicant: Stephanus Gerardus Johannes Blackenborg
Application No: 10/593,552
Filed: June 4, 2007
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REMARKS

The application has been amended. Claims 15, 19, 20 and 21 have been amended. Claim 18 has been canceled. Entry of this amendment and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 15 has been amended to include, *inter alia*, the limitations of canceled claim 18.

As currently amended, claim 15 is now specific to the method for producing a base material for screen printing with improved smoothness. One significant feature of the present invention is that the screen is pressed highly accurately into the resist layer. Additionally, a roller and counter-roller have been included to further distinguish the present invention. By use of the rollers, it is possible to achieve a uniform and controlled distance (d) from the dykes of the screen to the surface of the resist layer on the side of the protective film (sometimes referred to in the art as "Emulsion Over Mesh") and a controlled and uniform height (h) of the resist layer between the dykes of the screen. Appropriate distances and uniformity of the distance are essential to achieve excellent print quality.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Ichimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,246,815) (hereinafter "Ichimura '815") in view of Ichimura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,564,580) (hereinafter "Ichimura '580").

Ichimura '815 teaches a process wherein the contact-bonding of the screen with the resist layer is done by squeezing with the squeegee. Ichimura '815 fails to teach the roller of the present application. No suggestion to use a roller to improve the smoothness of the base material may be found either.

Ichimura '580 teaches a photosensitive resin composition which is highly suitable for production of printing plates, especially screen printing plates. In Application Example D2, a photosensitive liquor was applied as coating on a smooth surface of a polyester film. The photosensitive coating surface was gently bonded to a wet screen. Then, the screen plate having the photosensitive film and polyester film bonded thereto was placed on a flat stand, then the assembly was pressed from the screen side by a rubber roller or squeegee so that the photosensitive film was stuck firmly to the screen.

"Pressing" the screen further into the already bonded photosensitive film can be done at various degrees of force. In this particular case, it is unclear whether the screen is pressed entirely through the single photosensitive film or merely pressed into the photosensitive film. Accuracy appears entirely missing. Also, whether the screen is virtually uniformly filled with photosensitive material remains undisclosed.

The present invention, on the other hand, applies a roller and a counter-roller, the combination of which results in improved smoothness without unwanted "dark spots". The use of a roller and counter-roller has not been discussed in Ichimura '580 nor can the use of a "roller or squeegee" be considered to be equivalent.

By use of a roller, the pressure with which the roller presses the screen into the resist layer can be accurately monitored and controlled over the entire sheet of base material. The method of the current invention, therefore, has the advantage of being first to produce a base material whereof the surface of the resist layer has an improved smoothness, not obtainable by mere use of pushing or ironing a screen mesh into a stencil film material. Moreover, the present invention allows the preparation of such base material with improved smoothness in reel-to-reel fashion.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 15 and the claims that depend therefrom are patentable over the references of record. The application therefore is deemed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully solicited.

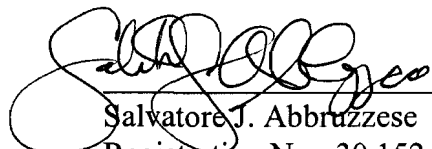
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under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17 and also should be treated as a constructive petition for an extension of time in this reply or any future reply pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response, the undersigned would be pleased to address them by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,



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